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Human Rights Council
Thirty-ninth session
10-28 September 2018
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Joint written statement* submitted by the Asian Legal Resource Centre, CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, World Organisation Against Torture, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2018]

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GE.18-14303(E)
1814303

Please recycle

Rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Bangladesh in the lead-up to the general election in December 2018**

In light of the rapidly deteriorating and increasingly repressive political climate in the lead-up to the 11th Parliamentary Elections in December 2018, the International Solidarity Group for Bangladesh (AFAD, ALRC, CIVICUS, FIDH, FORUM-Asia, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and OMCT) submits the following joint statement.

Extra-judicial killings (EJK) as a result of 'war on drugs'

In May 2018, the government of Bangladesh declared its intention to implement a "zero-tolerance" policy against suspected drug offenders. Since then, we have registered a dramatic rise in the number of reported EJK and mass arrests of suspected drug offenders in Bangladesh. According to information gathered by Bangladeshi NGO Odhikar, from 15/05 to 31/07/2018, 211 individuals were allegedly killed in relation to the government's 'war on drugs'. As of July 2018, 37,225 people had also been arrested in the context of the crackdown,1 often in disregard of basic fair trial rights.

Law enforcement agencies have claimed that the killings were the result of shootouts during anti-drug operations. However, family members of several suspects killed during the raids have reported that their relatives were taken away by plainclothes police officers before being later found dead.

We are deeply concerned that the government's anti-narcotic campaign may be used to silence the political opposition and dissenting voices and to grant impunity to law enforcement officials responsible for human rights violations. In some cases, the victims were political activists with no connection to drug trafficking, as for example, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activist Alamgir Badsha, who was arrested by members of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and found dead the following morning.2

Enforced disappearances (ED) continue

ED continue, despite the government's repeated denial that these occur in the country.3 The families of the disappeared are increasingly afraid of denouncing the incidents for fear of reprisals and there are only a few independent media in the country able to report on them. However, there is a significant concern that the number of ED could dramatically increase ahead of the upcoming general election and specifically target political oppositions, human rights activists, and those critical of the government.

Torture endemic amid rampant impunity

We are deeply concerned about the government's lack of commitment to acknowledge, combat, and punish torture. Torture is endemic, and it is routinely used by the state as a tool to intimidate and oppress political opponents, dissenting voices, vulnerable groups and ordinary citizens alike. In most cases, victims are tortured during interrogation while in remand. According to data gathered by Odhikar, at least 125 persons were tortured to death by law enforcement agencies from January 2009 to May 2018. In the vast majority of cases there seem to be no investigations into the torture allegations, left alone prosecution or conviction of the perpetrators.

Increasing violence against peaceful protesters and journalists

In late July and early August 2018, largely peaceful protests occurred in Dhaka after two teenagers were killed by a speeding bus on 29/07/2018 in the capital. Tens of thousands of students took to the streets to demand road safety and reforms in the transportation sector. The peaceful protests were met with excessive force by the police who, according to eyewitnesses, used rubber bullets and, in some cases, live bullets, as well as teargas canisters in an attempt to disperse the students. Protesters said they were also attacked by government supporters belonging to the ruling Awami League's student and youth wings, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and the Awami Juba League, with sticks, iron rods, and machetes.

During the clashes, hundreds were injured and an unknown number of protesters were arrested and detained, many under Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act, which has been systematically used to judicially harass human rights defenders (HRDs), journalists and dissenting voices. There were also reports of female detainees being molested. Moreover, on 4/08/2018, in an attempt to prevent individuals from sharing information

[1] http://www.newagebd.net/article/46322/37225-arrested-since-may-18-amu

[2] https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/bangladesh-activists-killed-war-drugs-180810083219446.html/

[3] http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/333810/

citizens relating to the protests, the government ordered telecommunication operators to suspend mobile Internet service across large parts of the country.

Abuse of repressive legislation

Despite having been repealed decades ago, sections of the **1974 Special Power Act (SPA)**, which empowered the police to arrest and prosecute people for holding secret meetings in an attempt to topple an elected government, are still being used to suppress Bangladeshi citizens' rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

On 25/05/2018, 36 individuals were arrested by the police under Sections 16(2) and 25(D) of the SPA for allegedly holding secret meetings for the destruction of Singair Police Station under Manikganj District. On 23/07/2018, the High Court warned the Inspector General of the Police "not to file any new case under the repealed sections of the SPA", which include Section 16 in its entirety. Two of the arrested persons under this case are still detained.4

The **2016 Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Bill** continues to be used by the government to impose tighter controls over the activities of human rights NGOs, hindering their ability to operate. The Bill imposes disproportionate restrictions on freedoms of expression and association in Bangladesh, in violation of international human rights standards, including Articles 12 and 22 of the ICCPR.5

Freedom of opinion and expression

Many independent media outlets have been shut down over the course of the past years, and journalists constantly face reprisals, including threats, physical attacks, arrests, persecution and detention and abuse in remand. We are deeply concerned that the situation will further deteriorate in the lead-up to the general election.

Attack against Mahmudur Rahman6

On 22/07/2018, Mahmudur Rahman, the Acting Editor of the *Daily Amar Desh,* was attacked by a mob of around 100 BCL members outside a courthouse as he was leaving a bail hearing in a case filed against him for allegedly defaming Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her niece, British Member of Parliament Tulip Siddiq.

The mob, led by BCL District President Tushar Ahmed, were waiting for Rahman outside the courtroom. When he tried to get into his car, the assailants hurled broken pieces of bricks, targeting his car and breaking its windows, which forced him to take shelter in the offices of an advocate. The BCL men then entered the room and beat Mr. Rahman, leaving him with injuries to the head and face.

This is only the latest in a series of acts of reprisals against Mahmudur Rahman. He was arrested on 11/04/2013 and spent 1,322 days in arbitrary detention before finally being released on bail on 24/11/2016. Despite his release on bail, Mahmudur Rahman is still facing prosecution under 81 cases, mainly on charges of defamation and sedition.

Arbitrary detention and torture of photojournalist Shahidul Alam7

Our organisations are deeply concerned over the arbitrary arrest of renowned photojournalist Shahidul Alam. On 5/08/2018, he was forcibly taken from his house in Dhaka by men in plain clothes who identified themselves as officers of the Detective Branch of the police. He was arrested in relation to so-called "provocative comments" he had made on social media and during an interview to *Al Jazeera,* in which he condemned the violence against the students during the protests. He was charged under Section 57 of the ICT Act. When brought to court, Shahidul Alam was not able to walk without support. He reported that he was tortured while in remand, where he remained for seven days.

Recommendations

We call on the **Human Rights Council** to urge the **Government of Bangladesh** to:

- Immediately suspend the 'war on drugs', order a thorough and independent investigation into all allegations of EJK that occurred as part of anti-narcotics operations and guarantee fair trial rights to all people arrested in the framework of such operations.

[4] https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/section-162-special-powers-act-scrapped-yet-used-arrest-1610176
[5] http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/bangladesh/2016/10/d23982/
[6] http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/bangladesh/2018/07/d24976/
[7] http://www.omct.org/es/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/bangladesh/2018/08/d24990/

- Acknowledge the existence of ED in Bangladesh, ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from ED (ICPPED), and criminalize ED in accordance with international standards.
- Disclose the fate and whereabouts of victims of ED and conduct thorough and independent investigations into all allegations of ED to bring perpetrators to justice.
- Immediately end the abuses and violence against peaceful protesters, reveal the identities and whereabouts of detained protesters, and release them.
- Repeal or significantly amend all repressive laws which prevent Bangladeshi citizens from enjoying their rights, including their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.
- Prevent and put an end to all acts of harassment and reprisals, including at the judicial level, against all HRDs, journalists, and activists in Bangladesh.
- Immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Shahidul Alam and all other HRDs, journalists, and activists arbitrarily arrested and detained for having legitimately exercised their rights and guarantee their physical and psychological integrity in all circumstances.
- End the use of torture and ill-treatment and bring perpetrators to justice.
- Immediately submit Bangladesh's initial report to the UN Committee Against Torture.
- Restore an enabling environment for free and fair elections by providing space for the opposition to campaign and for dissenting voices to express their opinions freely and safely.

**Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD), NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by European Centre for Law and Justice, The / Centre Europeen pour le droit, les Justice et les droits de l'homme, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Please recycle

Requesting that the U.N. Demand the Immediate Release of Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani and Other Christians that Have Been Wrongfully Imprisoned for Their Faith Thereby Protecting Their Right to Freely Practice Their Religion

1. INTRODUCTION

Five years ago, Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, an Iranian Pastor who was sentenced to die for 'apostasy' and had been in an Iranian prison for almost three years was aquitted and set free. Although the aquital and release seemed to signal that the Islamic Republic of Iran realised it must let Pastor Youcef live out his faith in peace, that was not the case. Pastor Youcef was arrested again in 2012 and 2016 for his religious faith. Most recently, on 22 July 2018, sources reported that plain clothed Iranian agents once again raided the Pastor's house and proceeded to beat him and his son before arresting Pastor Youcef for promoting Christianity. The only information Pastor Youcef's family was given was that he was scheduled to be transferred once again to Tehran's Evin Prison, a prison notorious for holding Christians and political opponents of Iran[1].

As a member of the United Nations, the Islamic Republic of Iran is obligated to adhere to the principles set forth in the U.N. Charter requiring members '[t]o achieve international cooperation… in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to [inter alia] religion'[2]. By repeatedly detaining and trying Pastor Youcef for practicing his religious faith, the Islamic Republic of Iran is violating its obligations under the U.N. Charter. Therefore, these violations not only concern the Islamic Republic of Iran but this entire Council as well.

Additionally, the Islamic Republic of Iran has violated its obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR)[3], which protects one's choice and exercise of religion, religious expression, and the right to peacefully assemble for religious purposes. Alongside Article 18's protection of religious freedom, Article 19 protects the right to religious expression and Article 20 (1) protects the right to peaceful assembly and association.

It is clear that the Islamic Republic of Iran has violated the principles of the UN Charter as well as the UNDHR by repeatedly and unlawfully detaining Pastor Youcef for peacefully practicing his Christian faith. This Council must stand against this injustice and protect the rights of Pastor Youcef and anyone else who seeks to peacefully practice their religion in Iran.

2. BACKGROUND

Iran first violated Pastor Youcef's human rights when he was arrested on October 2009[4]. This arrest came after he criticised the monopoly Islamic authorities have on education in Iran; in response to his contention that Iran's own constitution does not justify the promotion of one religion to the exclusion of all others through mandatory religious instruction in school, Iran threatened to take his life, and nearly did just that[5].

Article 14 of the Iranian Constitution states, '[T]he government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are duty-bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms… and to respect their human rights'[6]. Despite the protection provided of religious freedom by the Iranian constitution, Pastor Youcef was accused of apostasy in

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[1] Stoyan Zaimov, *Iranian Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani Beaten in Front of Family, Agents Tase Son*, THE CHRISTIAN POST (24 July 2018, 7:48 AM), https://www.christianpost.com/news/iranian-pastor-yousef-nadarkhani-beaten-in-front-of-family-agents-tase-son-226346/.

[2] U.N. Charter art. 73(c).

[3] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, G.A. Res. 217 (III) A, U.N. Doc. A/RES/217(III) (Dec. 10, 1948).

[4] Ed Payne, *State Dept : Release Pastor Jailed for 1,000 Days, Sentenced to Death in Iran*, CNN (10 July 2012, 5:23 AM), https://www.cnn.com/2012/07/10/world/meast/iran-detained-pastor/index.html.

[5] *Id.*

[6] IRAN'S CONSITTUTION OF 1979 WITH AMENDMENTS THROUGH 1989, art. 14.

September 2010, a charge for which he was sentenced to the death penalty[7]. On December 5th of the same year, he appealed his conviction to the Supreme Court of Iran. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court upheld his sentence on 28 June 2011[8].

During his imprisonment, Pastor Youcef was repeatedly pressured by Iranian police officers to recant his faith, yet he held fast and accepted his imprisonment because of his belief in Christianity. However, after worldwide outrage at the denial of Pastor Youcef's most basic rights, he was rightfully acquitted of the apostasy charge against him[9] after spending almost three years in prison.

Just three months later, on Christmas day, 25 December 2012, he was abducted from his home by Iranian police[10]. His second imprisonment was the consequence of him being charged with 'Evangelisation'. Despite acquitting him for apostasy, Iran continued to persecute him for his faith by sentencing him to three years of prison, only to release him on 7 January 2013, in consideration for the time already served before his acquittal. He was then sentenced to serve the remaining 45 days on probation[11].

It would seem that Iran had already done all it could to cause suffering beyond reckoning for Pastor Youcef, and yet he was taken away by police for a third time on 13 May 2016 during raids aimed specifically at Christians, and accused, along with three other Christians, of receiving funds from the British government. They were then released on bail a few weeks later[12].

While still out on bail, in July 2017 an Iranian court found all four Christians guilty of 'promoting zionist Christianity', and in doing so, 'acting against national security' and imposed a ten year sentence[13]. This charge is based on no credible evidence and its formulation speaks for itself. It is evidence that Iran is bent on forcing Christians into silence and arbitrarily using its justice system to do so.

The Pastor and the other three Christians immediately appealed, but their appeal was not heard until 13 December 2017 by Judges Hassan Babaee and Ahmad Zargar, infamously biased judges, one of whom was accused of losing judicial impartiality in 2014, and who faces sanctions in the United Kingdom[14]. Sadly, but not surprisingly, five months later, on 2 May 2018, their lawyers were notified by text that the judges had denied their appeal, and that the ten year sentence imposed on them was upheld[15]. Rather than being summoned, the verdict was enforced with utmost cruelty over two months later during the night of 22 July 2018, as Pastor Youcef was violently abducted from his home in a shameful instance of police brutality[16].

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[7] Joe Sterling, *In Iran, a Christian Pastor Faces Death Sentence*, CNN (7 Dec. 2010, 2:23 PM), http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/12/07/iran.christian.death.sentence/.

[8] *Iran: Written Confirmation of Death Sentence*, CSW.ORG (13 July 2011), https://www.csw.org.uk/2011/07/13/news/1031/article.htm.

[9] *Pastor Nadarkhani Released, Aquitted of Apostasy*, CSW.ORG (8 Sept. 2012), https://www.csw.org.uk/2012/09/08/news/1327/article.htm.

[10] Lisa Daftari, *Iran Re-Arrests Pastor Nadarkhani on Christmas Day*, FOX NEWS WORLD (30 Dec. 2012), http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/12/30/iran-re-arrests-pastor-nadarkhani-on-christmas-day.html.

[11] *Id.*

[12] *Iran: Pastor Nadarkhani Chrarged*, CSW.ORG (25 July 2016)https://www.csw.org.uk/2016/07/25/press/3196/article.htm

[13] *Iran: Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani and Three Other Converts Given Ten-Year Sentences*, CHURCH IN CHAINS (14 July 2017), https://www.churchinchains.ie/news-by-country/middle-east/iran/iran-pastor-yousef-nadarkhani-and-three-other-converts-given-ten-year-sentences/.

[14] *Iran: Four Christians to Appear Before Appeal Court*, CSW.ORG (31 Aug. 2017), https://www.csw.org.uk/2017/08/31/press/3684/article.htm.

[15] George Thomas, *4 Christians Serving 10-Year Prison Sentence in Iran Lose Appeal*, CBN NEWS (10 May 2018), http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2018/may/4-christians-serving-10-year-prison-sentence-in-iran-lose-appeal.

[16] *Iranian Pastor Taken to Evin Prison After Violent Raid on Home*, WORLD WATCH MONITOR (24 July 2018), https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/07/iranian-pastor-taken-to-evin-prison-after-violent-raid-on-home/.

His abduction occurred when his house was raided by police without any prior notice; his door was shattered and he was assaulted with electrical batons, despite not posing any threat whatsoever to the security forces. Incredibly, the police also beat and tasered his son. All of this needless brutality occurred in front of the Pastor's wife and younger children[17], and is simply the latest of the outrageous acts of persecution the Islamic Republic of Iran has inflicted on Pastor Youcef because of his faith. The three other Christian converts, who were found guilty of 'promoting zionist Christianity' along with Pastor Youcef in 2017 and whose appeals were also denied, were arrested on the following days[18] and have all been taken to Tehran's Evin Prison.

3. REQUEST

The very purpose of this Council is to protect the human rights of individuals living all around the world. It is imperative that this mission be taken seriously, and that the Islamic Republic of Iran be reminded of its obligations to actively protect the rights of Pastor Youcef and others so that they can practice their religion peacefully without fear of repeated harassment, arrest or violence from their government. Therefore, we respectfully request that this Council demand an immediate release of Pastor Youcef, as well as the other Christians wrongfully convicted and imprisoned with him.

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[17] *Iranian Pastor Nadarkhani Arrested in Violent Raid*, CSW.ORG (23 July 2018), https://www.csw.org.uk/2018/07/23/press/4050/article.htm.

[18] *Iranian Christians Arrested and Taken to Serve Sentences*, CSW.ORG (26 July 2018), https://www.csw.org.uk/2018/07/26/press/4051/article.htm.

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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Please recycle

Conditions in Bahrain's Jau Prison

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) takes this opportunity at the 39th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) to raise serious concern about the conditions of detention for individuals in Bahrain's Jau Prison. The prison is overcrowded and unsanitary, and prisoners report abusive behavior from guards and denial of medical care by prison staff. Further, in July 2018, prisoners began to report that water was being cut to the prison. As of mid-August 2018, reports of water cuts continued.

General Prison Conditions

Jau Prison is the primary long-stay prison in Bahrain. A large number of the prisoners being detained in Jau are political prisoners convicted on charges related to freedom of expression, assembly, and association. In 2013, the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman reported that the prison had a capacity of 1201 persons, but housed 1608, representing that Jau was approximately 34% over capacity by official numbers. In 2015, ADHRB and other organizations estimated that at least 2700 inmates were being detained. In 2017, the U.S. Department of State recorded 3485 individuals in custody, including in Jau, Dry Dock, and the women's facilities in Isa Town. With an estimated 26 percent in pre-trial detention and five percent being women, the remaining 69% of the 2017 figures (approximately 2405) are presumed to be held in Jau.

Inmates have reported that their cells, which were made for six inmates each, housed as many as twelve people by the end of 2013. Prisoners are forced to sleep in hallways between cells or the prison mosques.

This overcrowding has made Jau's living conditions even worse. Prison cells and toilets are unsanitary, the healthcare facilities are inadequate, and detainees are systematically tortured both physically and psychologically. Prisoners have reported being confined to their cell for more than 23 hours per day, only being allowed to leave during the hottest point of the day. This has forced some prisoners to eat inside their cells, attracting ants and cockroaches. This also prevent the inmates from participating in adequate exercise for their health, and prevents proper rehabilitation of injuries.

Damaged or unclean bedding is rarely replaced, it is difficult for families to send clothing from outside the prison, and the prison commissary fails to meet all inmates' needs. Additionally, not all prison cells have toilets. Due to this, inmates are occasionally forced to use the showers instead of toilets, which made the showers, as one prisoner described, "filthy."

Detainees have reported restrictions on visits with their families, and food and water, specifically around the time of Ramadan. They have also stated that religious rites are prohibited, and they are punished with solitary confinement if they attempt to practice.

The Human Rights Council Special Procedures raised many of these same concerns on multiple occasions in 2015, following the collective punishment and mass torture of inmates after unrest in the prison in March 2015. Despite this and pressure from the international community, the conditions in Jau have failed to improve, and have in fact worsened.

Denial of Medical Care

Many prisoners in Jau have reported that in addition to the inhumane conditions within the prison, prison staff frequently refuse to provide necessary medical care and medication to individuals in detention. Prisoners have reported refusal from guards to take individuals to the prison clinic. On the occasions when they are taken to the clinic, prisoners report that they are often provided no medical care or medication other than painkillers, regardless of the severity of their conditions. Prisoners have also reported that the prison administration contravenes the advice of medical personnel, refusing to fulfill recommendations for specialist care or surgery that would require care outside of the prison.

Further, since February 2017 the prison has implemented new policies designed to humiliate and degrade, particularly the requirement of full wrist and ankle shackles to visit the prison clinic and receive medical care. A number of political prisoners have refused to subject themselves to this abuse, and the prison staff has flatly refused to seek alternative methods to shackling, leaving these individuals completely deprived of medical care.

One such case of denied medical care is political prisoner Hassan Mushaima. Hassan Mushaima was previously the Secretary-General of the Haq Movement for Liberty and Democracy and is the Co-founder and former Vice President of al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, the largest political opposition group, which the Government of Bahrain dissolved in 2016. He was sentenced for "attempting to overthrow the government," for his role in the pro-democracy protests in 2011. He is currently serving a life sentence on these political charges, and has been subjected to ill

treatment in Jau Prison, including the continued denial of healthcare and restricted access to medication by the prison administration.

Mushaima, 70 years old, suffers from a myriad of chronic medical conditions, including cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and gout. His cancer is in remission, but he requires regular screenings to ensure that it has not returned, every six months. However, the prison authorities have consistently restricted his access to these crucial screenings. He has not been screened for cancer since September 2016. Further, he has not seen any physician since March 2017. Mushaima has not received his medication for diabetes and high blood pressure on a consistent basis since August 2017. He reports that prisoners often have to borrow medication from one another when prison officials skip dosages or provide a lower dose than is required. The prison authorities failed to provide Mushaima with medication for his diabetes for more than a month during November and December 2017.

In response to this continued denial of healthcare and medication, his son Ali Mushaima started a hunger strike outside the Bahraini embassy in London on 1 August 2018. Ali says that he will remain there and continue his hunger strike until the Bahraini authorities provide his father with medical care, permit him to have family visits unencumbered by shackles, and return his books. On 8 August 2018, authorities took Mr. Mushaima to the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Hospital without shackles, but Ali reports that he did not receive medical tests or cancer screenings. As of mid-August 2018, Ali Mushaima's hunger strike continued.

The Special Procedures offices have sent six communications to Bahrain concerning Hassan Mushaima between February 2011 and April 2014. However, Mr. Mushaima's conditions of detention have not improved.

Water Cuts

In addition to the failure of the Bahraini authorities to provide for the medical needs of prisoners, they have recently begun cutting water to the prison for extended periods of time, during some of the hottest days of the year. Water cuts began to Jau Prison on 9 July 2018, affecting at least six buildings and including New Dry Dock, which houses convicted individuals under 21 years of age.

Prisoners have reported in some buildings that these water cuts were ongoing for at least four consecutive days. They report that they are only given one cup of water per day, and that they are forced to drink water from the bathroom sinks. When the water to the bathrooms is also cut, the prisoners drink the juice in their meals rather than water. The prisoners report that water is running to the buildings for only one hour per day, which means that prisoners are unable to shower. At least one building has no air conditioning.

Prisoners have also reported that the guards have insulted them, with at least one guard stating that the prison cut the water in the hopes that the inmates would die from thirst. One prisoner was taken to solitary confinement for questioning a guard as to why the water had been cut.

Bahrain's current temperatures range from 32-39 degrees Celsius, with a heat index of 38-45 degrees Celsius. The Bahrain News Agency recently reported that July 2018 had the second-highest temperatures for July in Bahrain since 1902. The temperature exceeded 40 degrees on 17 days during July 2018. Further, the hottest day of the month was 8 July, when temperatures reached 45.3 degrees. Notably, water cuts in the prison began on the day immediately following the hottest day of the month.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The actions of the Bahraini authorities demonstrates a clear pattern of abusive behavior in Jau Prison, in violation of a number of international principles and obligations, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules). ADHRB therefore urges the international community to urge Bahrain to:

- Release all individuals who have been imprisoned for their political or human rights work, particularly Hassan Mushaima;
- Provide necessary medical care and medication without subjecting prisoners to degrading and humiliating measures such as shackles;
- Investigate all claims of torture and ill treatment in Jau Prison and other detention facilities; and,
- Immediately provide unrestricted access to water for all prisoners.

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Human rights bodies and mechanisms

Written statement* submitted by the Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

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Please recycle

Human Rights Council Membership Standards: Why Bahrain Does Not Deserve a Seat in the Council

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) takes this opportunity at the 39th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) to raise serious concerns over the Government of Bahrain's aspirations for membership on the Council. The deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain, coupled with Bahrain's failure to engage with the HRC and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, demonstrate to the international community that Bahrain would not be fit to be a Member State in the Council.

There has been an increasing number of States seeking to establish a set of membership standards for the Council. The growing concept to improve the standards of Members and hold States accountable has been mirrored elsewhere in the international community, including in a joint statement led by Ireland at the 32nd session of the HRC, which outlined a framework of objective criteria to proactively address situations of concern.

Bahrain has continuously failed to meet these proposed standards expected of a Member State.

I. Whether there has been a call for action by the UN Secretary General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights or a relevant UN organ, body or agency

Former High Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein has directly raised concerns regarding Bahrain's human rights record, and repeatedly called for concrete measures to be taken to improve the situation. In 2017, following a lethal attack on peaceful protestors by Bahraini security forces, he called on the Government of Bahrain to "promptly launch an independent, effective investigation into the deaths of five protestors." Last year, the High Commissioner also stated: "Since June 2016, the government of Bahrain has imposed severe restrictions on civil society and political activism through arrests, intimidation, travel bans and closure orders, with increasing reports of torture by the security authorities."

Earlier this year, during his remarks at the opening of the 38th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, High Commissioner Zeid reiterated past concerns and sharply criticized Bahrain for its continuing refusal to cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner and the mandates of the Human Rights Council Special Procedures.

II. Whether a group of Special Procedures have recommended that the Council consider action

On 15 August 2018, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) published an opinion concerning the detention of prominent human rights defender Nabeel Rajab. The WGAD ultimately found that Rajab's imprisonment is in violation of several norms and laws of international human rights, and that his detention is therefore arbitrary, and called for his immediate release. The WGAD further noted that Rajab's is not unique, and that widespread and systematic arbitrary detention may constitute "crimes against humanity."

Additionally, at the end of 2017, the Special Procedures on extrajudicial executions, freedom of religion or belief, physical and mental health and the working group on arbitrary detention, issued a statement expressing their concerns over the "systematic harassment" of Bahrain's Shia population and Sheikh Isa Qassim's case, urging " the authorities in Bahrain to allow Mr. Qassim to receive visitors freely, to ensure that medical staff can treat him without pressure of any kind, and to ensure that he can continue to access the medicines he needs after leaving hospital." The Special Procedures offices also sent communications concerning the use of military courts to try civilians, and the pattern of enforced disappearances, torture, and fair trial rights violations in their case. In total, Bahrain has been the subject of 49 joint communications from Special Procedures offices in the last five years, and 85 communications since 2011.

III. Whether the state concerned has a national human rights institution with A-status

The Sub-Committee on Accreditations' assessment of Bahrain's National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) as an institution that does not meet the criteria outlined for an A-status institution remains unchanged since 1 September 2017. Subsequently, the UN Human Rights Committee's concluding observations regarding Bahrain's initial International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) review, released in July 2018, questioned the independence of the NIHR and called on the Institution to fully comply with the Paris Principles in order to be able to fully carry out its mandate, both effectively and independently.

IV. Whether the State concerned has been willing to recognize that it faces particular human rights challenges and has laid down a set of credible actions, including a timetable and benchmarks to measure progress, to respond to the situation:

In 2011, the Bahraini Government accepted 26 recommendations issued by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), a panel of jurists and international human rights experts, but Bahrain's authorities have failed to make substantive progress on the majority of reforms. In 2017, the government reversed the two substantive BICI recommendations that it had previously implemented when it re-empowered the National Security Agency and allowed military courts to try civilians. Further, the Bahraini press lambasted the findings of the Human Rights Committee in the press following the release of their ICCPR concluding report, evincing a blatant disregard for the Committee's findings of human rights challenges in the country.

V. Whether the State concerned is engaging in a meaningful, constructive way with the Human Rights Council on the situation:

The Bahraini Government utilizes reprisals, including, torture, fabricated terrorism charges, travel bans and the targeting of family members, against individuals attempting to engage with international human rights bodies, particularly the Human Rights Council. Bahrain has also failed to comply with the vast majority of its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. At the end of its 2nd Cycle UPR in 2017, the Bahraini Government declined to fully implement any of its 176 recommendations. Of the 158 recommendations accepted by the government, only two saw significant progress toward implementation, while 23 others were merely technically implemented with little substantive impact. Bahrain accepted even less recommendations for its 3rd Cycle UPR, and it submitted a misleading and inaccurate National Report.

VI. Whether the State concerned is effectively cooperating with Human Rights Council Special Procedures, including by enabling country visits:

Bahrain has not allowed any of the Special Procedures to visit since 2006, despite repeated requests by various mandate holders. In recent years it has rejected country visit requests from the Special Rapporteurs on torture, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of opinion and expression, and human rights defenders, as well as the Working Groups on arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and discrimination against women.

VII. Whether the State concerned is engaging with OHCHR, including in the field of technical assistance and effective engagement with the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies:

In July 2018 the UN Human Rights Committee released its concluding observations regarding Bahrain's initial ICCPR periodic report, marking Bahrain's first review of compliance with treaty obligations despite ratifying the Covenant in 2006. The report came over a decade late, as State Parties were expected to submit an initial report one year after ratification. Following the release of the concluding observations, which intensely scrutinized Bahrain's commitment to civil and political rights, the Bahraini government responded by questioning the independence of the treaty body and seeking to undermine the process.

High Commissioner Zeid also criticized the Bahraini government for its lack of willingness to cooperate with his Office, expressing that "I have also repeatedly offered the support of my Office to assist with practical improvements. These efforts have been met with point-blank denials, unfounded accusations and unreasonable last-minute conditions to technical missions."

VIII. Whether a relevant regional mechanism or institution has identified a situation as requiring the attention of the international community; or whether the State concerned is cooperating with relevant regional organizations

No such mechanism or institution exists.

IX. Whether the State is facilitating or obstructing access and work on the part of humanitarian actors, human rights defenders, and the media:

Bahraini authorities have consistently and increasingly obstructed the work of civil society actors in the kingdom, including human rights defenders and the media. The Human Rights Committee's concluding observations regarding Bahrain's initial ICCPR periodic report noted how restrictions remained on freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and belief. Counter-terrorism measures are used against human rights defenders and political activists, such as the members of the Bahrain 13, to silence free speech. The government also targeted and closed the last remaining independent newspaper, Al-Wasat. The treaty body's report also voiced concerns over human rights organizations and

opposition groups that have been dissolved and use of citizenship revocation as a punishment against individuals exercising their rights. The Committee urged Bahrain to immediately and unconditionally release anyone held solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights.

Conclusion:

Bahrain has repeatedly expressed interest in becoming a Member State to the HRC, despite their abysmal human rights record and lack of cooperation with international human rights bodies and mechanisms. The Government of Bahrain remains in breach of its international obligations to safeguard human rights and has repeatedly violated and curtailed the fundamental rights of people in the country. Therefore, the kingdom should not be allowed a seat in the Council.

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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2018]

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1814315

Please recycle

Saudi Arabia's Ongoing Targeting of Women's Rights Defenders

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) welcomes this opportunity at the 39th Session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) to raise serious concerns about Saudi Arabia's arrests of women's rights defenders and activists. Over the past several months, Saudi authorities have arrested over a dozen activists and women's rights defenders in a coordinated campaign to target dissidents and suppress criticism. Among those officials have arrested are Samar Badawi, Naseema Alsada, Loujain al-Hathloul, Dr. Hatoon al-Fassi, Dr. Aziza al-Yousef, and Dr. Iman al-Nafjan, as well as Mohammed al-Bajadi, Omar al-Said, and Ibrahim al-Modeimigh.

Continued deterioration of women's rights and the silencing of activists in Saudi Arabia

In September 2017, the Government of Saudi Arabia announced it would lift its ban on women driving. The decision represented a watershed moment in the fight for gender equality in the kingdom, although the government did not commit to addressing structural concerns about the persistence of the ubiquitous system of male guardianship over women. In June 2018, the government officially lifted the ban, allowing women to drive without requiring they secure consent from their male guardian. The move was widely heralded although it did not affect broader gender equality concerns, particularly surrounding male guardianship.

Even as the government lifted the ban, officials warned women's rights activists against making public statements. Security forces also embarked on a coordinated campaign targeting the very women who had been so vocal in the struggle for women's rights over the years. The systematic targeting of women's rights defenders and activists signals the government's intent to continue to silence dissenting voices. Indeed, in the days before the government officially ended the driving ban, officials arrested a dozen women's rights defenders and rights activists. Since then, officials have continued to target women's rights activists.

The targeting of Samar Badawi and Naseema Alsada

Among the women's rights defenders arrested are Samar Badawi and Naseema Alsada who were arrested on 30 July for their outspoken advocacy advancing for women's rights in Saudi Arabia.[1] The driving force behind their arrests is the Presidency of State Security (PSS), a security and intelligence body formed by royal decree in July 2017. The decree de-fanged the Ministry of Interior, previously the government body in charge of domestic security and countering terrorism and responsible for the majority of domestic rights abuses, from arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance to torture and extrajudicial killings – these responsibilities have been transferred to the PSS. The decree empowers the PSS to "focus on the security of the nations, citizens and expatriates and counter terrorism, spying and ideological invasions of any kinds." The PSS' mandate to pursue terrorists and prosecute terror crimes was strengthened in the November 2017 Law on Terrorism and Its Financing, which grants the PSS extensive powers.

Badawi's advocacy work goes as far back as 2010, when she filed a lawsuit against the government challenging the male guardianship system over women, especially in circumstances concerning marriage. She has since become a leading figure of the women's rights movement in Saudi Arabia, championing the fight against the male guardianship system and pressing for gender equality for Saudi women. Badawi's work earned her international renown, and the United States Department of State honored her with the International Woman of Courage Award in 2012. She also spoke at the 27th session of the UN HRC in September 2014, participating in a panel on women's rights in Saudi Arabia and delivering an oral intervention in front of the Council. In her remarks, she highlighted human rights violations in Saudi Arabia by the Saudi government. She also called for the release of her then-husband and prominent human rights defender Waleed Abu al-Khair (who was also her lawyer in her 2010 lawsuit) and all other political prisoners.

After returning from Geneva, Badawi attempted to travel in December 2014 to Brussels to participate in the 16th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum. However, she discovered she was banned from traveling. She has since been unable to leave the country. Then two years later, in 2016, officials detained her with her two-year old daughter for opposing restrictions on women's healthcare and travel. In 2017, she was again intimidated and harassed, when authorities summoned her for questioning without giving her a reason. She was held briefly before being released.[2]

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[1] "ADHRB and ESOHR Condemn Saudi Arabia's Arrest of Samar Badawi and Naseema Alsada," ADHRB, 1 August 2018, https://www.adhrb.org/2018/08/adhrb-and-esohr-condemn-saudi-arabias-arrest-of-samar-badawi-and-naseema-alsada/.

[2] Ibid.

Alsada, like Badawi, has also been targeted by the government because of her activism. Alsada has been a strong voice in the fight for human rights and women's right to drive in the kingdom, previously advocating for protestors around the country who had been arrested by Saudi authorities, while also training human rights activists. As a result of her activities, she is among the most prominent women activists in Saudi Arabia. But her fight for gender equality also attracted the attention of the Saudi authorities, who have interrogated and intimidated her, warning her about her advocacy efforts and removing her name from the ballot when she ran in the elections for a seat on the municipal council in 2015.

A broader trend in suppressing women's rights defenders

Badawi and Alsada's arrests are the most recent developments in broader efforts by the Saudi government to target women's rights defenders and silence dissent throughout the kingdom. In addition to arresting Badawi and Alsada, officials also arrested over a dozen prominent human rights defenders and women's rights activists.

In May and June 2018, the Saudi government arrested almost a dozen prominent women's rights activists – seven women and three men – including some of the kingdom's most notable advocates in the fight for gender equality.[3] Among them are Professors Aziza al-Yousef and Iman al-Nafjan, Loujain al-Hathloul, Aisha al-Mana, Madeha al-Ajroush, Hessa al-Sheikh, and Dr. Fatoon al-Hassi. Authorities also arrested Dr. Ibrahim al-Modeimigh, and members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA) Mohammed al-Bajadi and Omar al-Said.

Due to the scope of the arrests, especially as they came around the time the government lifted the ban on women driving, in late June, nine UN Special Rapporteurs released a statement on the arrests in May. They called for the immediate release of the detainees noting the kingdom's contradicting messages about women's rights. They stated, "[i]n stark contrast with this celebrated moment of liberation for Saudi women, women's human rights defenders have been arrested and detained on a wide scale across the country, which is truly worrying and perhaps a better indication of the Government's approach to women's human rights. We call for the urgent release of all those detained while pursuing their legitimate activities in the promotion and protection of women's rights in Saudi Arabia."[4]

They highlighted that the very same women who had actively fought for the right to drive were now finding themselves imprisoned for their advocacy. While some of the activists from the May arrests have been released, the recent arrests of Samar Badawi and Naseema Alsada in July further demonstrates the government's ongoing intent to silence the kingdom's activists and dissenting voices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The arrests of women's rights activists Samar Badawi and Naseem Alsada are the most recent developments in the Saudi government's ongoing mission to silence peaceful dissidents. The targeting of these two women is indicative of a larger trend that began in late May, with the arbitrary arrests of almost a dozen women's rights defenders around the time the Saudi government lifted the women's driving ban. Despite women's new right to drive, Saudi policy is in direct contradiction with the actions taken by Saudi authorities to intimidate, harass, and detain women's rights activists.

ADHRB calls on the Government of Saudi Arabia to:

- Immediately release all detained women's rights activists, including Samar Badawi and Naseema Alsada and drop all charges against them;
- Release all human rights defenders and political activists currently detained in the kingdom and drop all charges against them;
- Cease the harassment of peaceful critics and enshrine the right to peaceful assembly, association, and expression in domestic law; and
- Abolish the male guardianship system.

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3 "Saudi Arabia arrests 10 for their work promoting women's rights," ADHRB, 24 May 2018, https://www.adhrb.org/2018/05/saudi-arabia-arrests-10-for-their-work-promoting-womens-rights/.

4 "Saudi Arabia must immediately free women human rights defenders held in crackdown, say UN experts," UN OHCHR, 27 June 2018, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23270&LangID=E.

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Universal periodic review

Written statement* submitted by the Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

ADHRB Assesses Saudi Arabia's Implementation of its UPR Commitments

Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB) welcomes this opportunity at the 39th Session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC), and ahead of Saudi Arabia's 3rd Cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in November 2018, to raise serious concerns about the Government of Saudi Arabia's systematic human rights violations and disregard of its previous UPR commitments accepted during earlier UPR sessions.

During the kingdom's 2nd UPR cycle in October 2013, the Saudi government received 225 recommendations covering numerous thematic issues. The government accepted 187 recommendations. However, five years after committing itself to reforming its human rights practices and laws, ADHRB assesses that the kingdom has completely fulfilled, in spirit and in practice, only a small fraction of the recommendations it accepted.

Overview on Restrictions

The kingdom maintains numerous restrictions on women's rights, civil society, civic space, freedom of expression and opinion, and freedom of religion, while officials target human rights defenders, and courts continue to hand down death sentences to members of the Shia religious minority for spurious terror crimes.

Civil Society

During the 2nd cycle UPR in October 2013, states made 11 recommendations to improve the kingdom's civic space. The government accepted five recommendations, promising to improve the space for civil society. However, it has fully implemented only one of the recommendations, indicating a lack of will to bringing its laws and practices in line with international human rights standards. Rather than open up space for civil society and human rights and political organizations, authorities have arrested many human rights defenders (HRDs) and systematically shuttered existing organizations. Among those HRDs who have been arrested are Mohammed al-Bajadi, Omar al-Said, Abdulaziz al-Shubaily, and Issa al-Hamid, who are members of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (ACPRA), as well as Waleed Abu al-Khair, Naimah al-Matrod, and Samar Badawi.

Free Expression

The kingdom also received several recommendations concerning ending restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and opinion, but the government continues to criminalize specific forms of speech, in particular criticism of the royal family, ruling structure, or the state ideology. To this end, authorities maintain a tight grip on major broadcasting agencies, radio and television networks, and newspaper publications, censoring content deemed unacceptable and arresting violators of this policy. Newspapers in particular must be licensed by the king and the editor-in-chief appointed by the government. Likewise, journalists, bloggers, or writers who do not abide by the restrictions on publishable content are subject to prosecution by authorities. Writers and journalists including Alaa Brinji, Waidi al-Ghazzawi, Zuhair Kutbi, and Saleh al-Shehi have been prosecuted for criticizing state-inflicted violence during demonstrations, condemning corruption and the royal family, supporting human rights activists, and calling for an end to religious discrimination.

Women's Rights

During the kingdom's 2nd Cycle UPR, it accepted eight recommendations regarding women's rights, concerning repealing or abolishing the male guardianship system and promoting and protecting women's rights. While the kingdom recently lifted the ban on women driving, it has yet to take meaningful steps to address or repeal structural limitations facing women and girls, in particular stemming from the male guardianship system.

Recently, the government has permitted women to study at universities, allowed them to access health care, and allowed them to work without needing their male guardian's permission. However, women remain unable to travel internationally, marry, or get out of jail without their guardian's permission. But the guardianship system persists in a more pernicious manner, as it is a daily burden on women, constricting how they live their lives. Thus while specific restrictions have been relaxed, the government has refused to address the more fundamental nature of gender inequality and male power over women.

Furthermore, security forces continue to target and detain women rights activists for their advocacy work promoting and protecting women's rights, demonstrating that recent changes have not translated into protections for outspoken women who are critical of the government. As a result, ADHRB assesses that the kingdom has not taken sufficient steps to meet the UPR recommendations or bring its practices in line with international norms concerning women's rights.

Human Rights Defenders

During Saudi Arabia's 2nd Cycle UPR, the government accepted seven recommendations on the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of association and peaceful assembly, including several calling for the protection of individuals who choose to exercise these rights. However, the climate in which HRDs work in Saudi Arabia remains sharply constricted, with the government maintaining numerous laws inhibiting their work and empowering security forces to arrest them. Among the legislation used to arrest HRDs are the Anti-Cyber Crime Law, which targets activists over social media content, the 2014 and 2017 Counter-terror Laws, and the Law on Associations.

In 2015, the Saudi government promulgated the Law on Associations, which governs the formation of associations and organizations. But rather than allow for the formation of independent societies and associations, the law empowers officials to prohibit the establishment of an independent civil society, with authorities using the law to shut down civil society organizations and jail HRDs. Authorities also use the 2017 Penal Law for Crimes of Terrorism and Its Financing to detain peaceful protestors under the guise of fighting terrorism. Prior to the promulgation of the 2017 Counter-terror Law, the government used the 2014 Counter-terror Law to systematically detain and imprison HRDs and activists.

As a result of these laws, officials have systematically arrested HRDs. Among those who have been arrested since the 2nd Cycle UPR are Mohammed al-Bajadi, Omar al-Said, Abdulaziz al-Shubaily, Issa al-Hamid, Naimah al-Matrod, Samar Badawi, Loujain al-Hathloul, Mohammed al-Otaibi, and Abdullah al-Attawi, among many others.

Execution

Despite numerous recommendations to the kingdom that it abolish the death penalty and halt executions, the kingdom continues to sentence people to death and levy capital punishment convictions against drug smugglers and peaceful protesters. As a result, Saudi Arabia ranks among the top five countries for the frequent use of the death penalty.

Since 2014, the kingdom has executed nearly 600 people. In 2017, it executed 143 people. In 2016, it executed 154 people. In 2015, it executed 157 people. The majority of those executed are convicted of murder or non-violent drug crimes, like smuggling. However, the kingdom has also executed a number of peaceful protesters. Among them were Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, a social justice activist and Shia cleric, who was executed on 2 January 2016 in a mass execution of 47 people. He was executed alongside four men arrested for crimes committed as minors. Then, on 11 July 2017, authorities executed four Shia protesters, Yusuf al-Mshaikhass, Amjad al-Muaybad, Zuhair al-Basri, and Mahdi al-Sayegh.

Equally concerning is the number of peaceful protesters currently on death row. ADHRB is aware of at least 32 men on death row for peaceful assembly, most of them Shia. Seven of them were minors at the time of their arrest, and were tortured into confessing to committing terror acts before being sentenced to death. Among those on death row are Ali al-Nimr, Dawood al-Marhoon, Abdullah al-Zaher, and Munir al-Adam.

Torture

Despite fully accepting two recommendations made during its 2nd UPR cycle calling on courts to ensure defendants are guaranteed due process in trials and officials to abstain from the use of torture in accordance with the kingdom's Convention Against Torture obligations, torture remains rampant in Saudi prisons. Moreover, the kingdom's criminal justice system in the country allows false confessions obtained through torture to act as valid evidence in court, disregarding the defendant's claims that they were obtained under conditions of torture. For example, many Shia men on death row, including Ali al-Nimr, Dawood al-Marhoon, and Abdullah al-Zaher are currently in prison awaiting a death sentence after trials in which they were tortured until they confessed to spurious charges. Torture by the Saudi authorities has also caused some prisoners to suffer from long-term or lifetime injuries such as weakened eyesight, heart problems, chronic pain, and deafness through ruthless methods such as beating and electric shock.

Concluding Recommendations

We find that Saudi Arabia has failed to implement the majority of its recommendations dating from the 2nd Cycle UPR. Instead, the government has increasingly targeted HRDs, further restricted civic space, and continued to apply the death penalty. Now, with Saudi Arabia's 3rd UPR cycle approaching we call on States to follow up on recommendations that have gone unaddressed and unimplemented. We call on the Government of Saudi Arabia to implement its accepted recommendations, and to work with the international community to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Achievement of Revitalization of Victim Communities of the past is an Essential Component Strengthening Human Rights.

The case of the Greek-Orthodox Community of Istanbul

The strengthening of the Rule of Law and respect of Human Rights is directly linked with essential remedy measures towards the victim communities whose rights have been violated. This is highly important in the case of the communities driven towards an almost annihilation. Urgent measures are needed for such communities to survive and continue with their historical existence and their role to the country they belong. The Greek-Orthodox Community of Istanbul constituting with its 125.000 members the 15% of the city's population at the foundation of Republic of Turkey in 1923, presently are living as an expatriate community up to 98% of its population out of their native city of Istanbul. This occurred, as we have reported several times in this forum, because of the state driven discriminatory measures and the violation of human rights throughout Twenty Century. The Present Government of Turkey being in power from the year 2003 on several occasions recognized the unjust acts of the past against the Greek-Orthodox Community. Recently (22 April 2018) the President Republic of Turkey Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a nationwide TV interview recognized this fact saying that: "there were thousands I say hundred thousand Greek-Orthodox (Rum) in our country. They were forced to emigrate because of mistakes and this was a pity". During the last 8 years the EFC pursued a policy of direct communication with the Government of Turkey functionaries to alleviate the consequences of above mentioned violations by formulating and implementing remedy measures. The principal aim of the proposed measures is to prevent the disappearance of the Community residing in their native city Istanbul. Despite some noticeable improvements in some issues such as: restitution of citizenships, change of attitude towards Community Welfare Foundations and especially towards the Ecumenical Patriarchate, there are still many pending issues to mention such the prohibition of elections in Welfare Foundations and the return of their real estate properties which have been confiscated in the past. However the most important measure is the necessity the State of Turkey to support the repatriation of young generation members of the Community by implementing measures that have been proposed in the past by the EFC.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by the Universal Peace Federation, a non-governmental organization in special status, and the Women's Federation for World Peace International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

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Please recycle

Countering the World Drug Problem: Prioritizing Prevention through Strengthening Families

"The world spends much more energy and resources managing crises than preventing them. Thus the UN must uphold a strategic commitment to a "Culture of Prevention", pledged in 2005 but yet to materialize", explained newly elected UN Secretary General Antonia Guterres addressing the General Assembly. in critique of the body he was to head- and perhaps delineate his strategic priorities

We salute the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) especially the programs conducted in Latin America called "Strong Families" or "Strengthening Families". Looking more deeply into these programs it becomes evident that the preventative impact of strong families in relation to crime or drug abuse is very high and based on strong statistical evidence, yet the good news doesn't seem to travel far.

Strong families deliver the best protection against drugs and crime among young people. Quality relationships based on honesty, good communication skills, care for each other, accountability etc. between siblings and parents and children, can and should be taught and learnt so as to create a climate in families where destructive elements cannot easily invade young people. These qualities that so called "strong families" can naturally access and promote are a very effective deterrent for the debilitating influence of drugs and crime on, especially during their most vulnerable years of adolescence.

The positive effect of the programs of UNODC can be enhanced dramatically through parallel appropriate family-supporting measures provided by respective governments. UNODC has the necessary statistics and research allowing governments to learn how to support and adapt these programs to guarantee the best outcomes. A more pro-active policy of resources sharing and inter agency cooperation in this field could free desperately needed resources to areas like development and higher education.

It is however equally evident that if governments act carelessly in dealing with families or in extreme cases even counteract the positive approach of these programs, drug abuse and crime especially among youth will increase appreciably. Guiding and empowering parents to take on their primary responsibility towards their own children and should be the target of any efforts in crime and drug prevention measures. Governments should not only use repressive means, but show greater willingness to invest human and financial resources in support of positive preventative programs.

The Universal Peace Federation would like to offer the following recommendations:

1) The programs of UNODC should be adapted to other parts of the world, particularly also to nations of the Western hemisphere where drug abuse has dramatically increased due to governmental inabilities in many places, to combat family breakdown and or analyze the phenomenon of unattended and neglected youth properly. The preventative effects of "Strong Families" has not been widely understood, especially in the West.
2) Governments in all parts of the world should make the "Strong Families" Policy a **first priority** as to combat crime and drug abuse most effectively.
3) More research should be done worldwide in matters of "family education" as to guarantee that governments have the capacities and know-how to support the efforts of UNODC.

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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by the Women's Federation for World Peace International, Soroptimist International, International Alliance of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status and the Graduate Women International, Tandem Project, The, Mothers Legacy Project, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status

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Please recycle

Human Rights: Women and Trade Policy**

This statement is submitted by Women's Federation for World Peace International, together with Graduate Women International, Soroptimist International, International Alliance of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association of Thailand, Tandem Project, Mother's Legacy Project; international NGO's all committed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These goals hold little hope of success if more dramatic measures are not taken to advance opportunities for women and girls as movers and leaders in society – and importantly, their economic empowerment and access to education and knowledge.

Trade provides tremendous potential towards growth and prosperity. However, unethical trade, trade which does not respect the parameters laid down by international frameworks and conventions, can and is having a negative impact on human rights, and especially on women's rights. Women and marginalised or excluded communities, as consumers, workers or entrepreneurs, are disproportionately affected by unethical trade and policies which do not respect the criteria on which they were established.

In global trade negotiations, WTO, Bilateral trade agreements, FTAs, GSP, EBA, GSP+ etc , marginalised communities, the informal sector and women's voices are often excluded from policy-negotiations, and even from impact assessments or safe-guard clauses. This leaves women and those at risk from poverty without any protection or livelihood security and continues the demise of women's rights in general.

Furthermore, most countries now focus their trade policy on liberalisation and open-markets, assuming these macro-economic policies are "gender neutral." However, experts and activists, such as the Women's Economic and Social Think Tank (WESTT) have warned that failing to recognise, and work to address, the disproportionate affect of trade liberalisation policies on women could have lasting effects on economies, and on society as a whole. Trade benefit programs that are currently in place must be effectively implemented so as to best serve disenfranchised groups. As well, international conventions on women's rights, such as CEDAW must be respected in all trade agreements.

Recommendations

1. CEDAW must be respected and implemented by all countries in all trade negotiations. Immediate suspension of trade agreements, trade subsidies or preferential tariffs must be enforced where CEDAW is not being respected or implemented.

2. UN and ILO conventions on equal treatment, decent work and equal pay for equal work, must be implemented and countries who fail to comply with, or report, on such Conventions should have their trade agreements suspended ahead of an investigation into breaches of the Convention.

3. Trade policy is not gender neutral and women must be included equally in all trade discussions, especially as trade imbalances disproportionately affect the informal sector where women are mainly employed and self-employed.

**Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association of Thailand, NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.